Helvetica Scans Presents

KALYX

Chapter 4

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Head over to [illegible]

We're currently [illegible] redrawers and [illegible] Kings! Viking, Scorpo[illegible] Da-troyu4, Kumiko no Mikaku, and Mousou Telepathy.

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YES.
"DISSOLVE OUR RELATIONSHIP"?
HUH...?

"THE STATE OF BEING IN LOVE".
TO BE HONEST, I SIMPLY WANTED TO EXPERIENCE

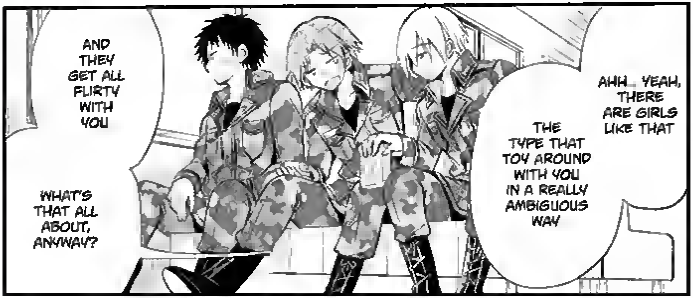
I'M SORRY.
HUH? OH.. THEN YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN OKAY WITH SOMEONE OTHER THAN ME?
I WAS IN LOVE WITH THE IDEA OF LOVE...

SO PLEASE PRETEND LIKE THIS NEVER HAPPENED..
SLAP
TO WRAP YOU UP IN THIS AND INCREASE YOUR WORKLOAD
BUT THAT'S SELFISH, ISN'T IT?
WAIT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THAT BUD?
WILL IT WILT AND DISAP-PEAR?
IT WON'T DAMAGE YOUR REPUTATION AT ALL!
AH, OF COURSE, I'LL EX-PLAIN PROPERLY TO THE HIGHER-UPS!
SHAKESHAKESHAKE
CLENCH!
BUT UNTIL MY NEXT PARTNER COMES,
I CAN STOP IT THROUGH FORCE OF WILL!
NO, ONCE THE BUD BEGINS TO GROW, IT WILL NOT DISAPPEAR.
IT WORKS LIKE THAT?!
HUH?!
CONFUSED

Chapter 4
[Number One to Me]

SERIOUSLY?!
Whoa! When?!
WELL, I SAW GIRLFRIEND, BUT...
I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING OUT FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS.
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE SHE DIDN'T SEE IT THE SAME WAY

WHAT'S WRONG, SAWAMURA?
YOU LOOK LIKE A GUY WHO GOT DUMPED AFTER THREE DAYS.
.....
YOU CAN TELL?


AHH... YEAH, THERE ARE GIRLS LIKE THAT
THE TYPE THAT TOY AROUND WITH YOU IN A REALLY AMBIGUOUS WAY
AND THEY GET ALL FLIRTY WITH YOU
WHAT'S THAT ALL ABOUT, ANYWAY?

IT'S BETTER TO FIND THESE THINGS OUT EARLY ON, ANYWAY
Cheer up, I'll give you a biscuit.
YEAH.. THAT'S TRUE.

IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE ME.
IF THAT'S ALL IT WAS, I DIDN'T NEED TO WORRY SO MUCH ABOUT IT.

SO THE REASON SHE WAS SO HAPPY ABOUT GOING OUTSIDE AND GETTING A BOOK...
WAS SIMPLY THAT HER DESIRES WERE SATISFIED.

IT CAUGHT ME OFF GUARD SINCE IT WAS SO SUDDEN,
BUT IT'S A GOOD THING I WAS ABLE TO FINISH OFF THE JOB BEFORE I STARTED DEVELOPING WEIRD EMOTIONS
I'LL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO MY OLD LIFESTYLE.
NO DEEP THOUGHTS.
SHAKE
NO... IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT CONCERNS ME ANY MORE
WILL SHE THEN BLOOM AND WILT ALL THE SAME?
NADEKO WILL FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO BE HER PARTNER.
LIVING WITH THE FLOW.
YOU'RE PROBABLY ONE OF THE BEST IN OUR CLASS.
GOOD AIM AS ALWAYS, SAWAMURA.

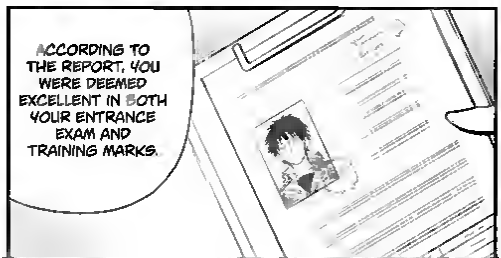
CLICK
NO, THIS ISN'T ANYTHING IMPRESSIVE.
HAHA, THAT'S TRUE, BUT YOU CAN'T COMPARE YOURSELF TO THEM.
HAVE SOME PRIDE, YOU'RE BETTER THAN MOST OF OUR UNIT.
BUT AREN'T THE SPECIAL UNITS WAY, WAY BETTER?
PEOPLE LIKE ME ARE EVERY-WHERE.
WE RECEIVED A PARTNERSHIP DISSOLUTION REQUEST FROM NADEKO.
IS THIS CORRECT?
PRIVATE SAWA-MURA.
COULD I HAVE A MOMENT?

IF THAT IS WHAT NADEKO WISHES FOR, I DON'T MIND.
YES.
AND "SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IS USELESS" WERE TAUGHT IN TRAINING
"SOLDIERS MUST BE STUPID"
IF I'M TOLD I'M NOT NEEDED, I'LL RESPOND "IS THAT SO?" AND LEAVE.
DO YOU NOT HAVE ANY OPINION OF YOUR OWN?
NO, IT WAS SIMPLY A JOB.
BASIC TRAINING HAS DRILLED ITSELF INTO YOU WELL.
SCRIBBLE
I SEE.
OF COURSE THE ONLY THINGS A SOLDIER REQUIRES ARE ALERTNESS AND COMBAT STRENGTH.
SHUT
HUH. PERMISSION WAS GRANTED A LOT QUICKER THAN I'D IMAGINED.
THEN I SHALL CONTINUE TO SEE THE TRANSFER THROUGH

2ND LIEUTENANT, YOU'VE BEEN AROUND THESE "FLOWER GIRLS" FOR SEVERAL YEARS, CORRECT?
YES?
EXCUSE ME, COULD I ASK ONE QUESTION?
...
OH, UNDERSTOOD
THAT IS ALL

ARE THESE GIRLS SATISFIED WITH A LIFE
THAT ENDS BECAUSE OF SOMETHING LIKE LOVE?

MAY I ASK ONE OF MY OWN?
BEFORE I ANSWER THAT QUESTION,


ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, YOU WERE DEEMED EXCELLENT IN BOTH YOUR ENTRANCE EXAM AND TRAINING MARKS.

DO YOU HAVE NO INTENTION TO DISPLAY YOUR TALENTS?
AND YET YOU DECLINED.
APPARENTLY, YOU WERE EVEN OFFERED A CHANCE TO TRANSFER TO A SPECIAL UNIT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.
YOUR SUPERIORS HAVE YOU MARKED AS "FIT FOR PROMOTION".
NO.
AFTER ALL, I'M A MEDIOCRE MAN.
TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, I PERFORMED BETTER THAN MY PEERS.
IT'S TRUE THAT I'VE HAD A BIT OF TALENT SINCE I WAS A KID.

BUT AS YOU GROW OLDER, YOU REALIZE IT, DON'T YOU?
THAT THERE'S AN UPPER LIMIT.
YOU START SEEING A LINE YOU CAN'T CROSS NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU WORK,
AND YOU REALIZE THAT YOU'RE STUCK AT A CERTAIN LEVEL.
IT'S BETTER TO SAFELY STAY WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF WHAT YOU CAN DO.
IF YOU PUSH YOURSELF AND TRY, ALL YOU'LL DO IS DESPAIR OVER YOUR OWN LACK OF ABILITY.
TO BE SWEPT ALONG WITH THE FLOW
IS THE EASIEST WAY TO LIVE.
I SEE
YOU AND I MAY BE QUITE SIMILAR.
SLIP

?!
A FLOWER...?!
I, TOO, WAS ONCE A PATIENT HERE.
THERE WAS A MAN TOWARD WHOM I FELT SOMETHING LIKE LOVE AS WELL.
BUT I WAS HESITANT.
"ARE THESE FEELINGS REAL? IS IT WORTH MY LIFE?"
WHILE I WAS WORRYING OVER THESE QUESTIONS

THAT MAN WAS KILLED IN ACTION.
WHILE VISITING HIS GRAVE, I REGRETTED NEVER TELLING HIM MY FEELINGS.
BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.
THE FRAGMENTED REMAINS OF MY EMOTIONS
CORRUPTED MY BODY.

I BECAME UNABLE TO FEEL "HAPPINESS" NO MATTER WHAT I DO.
HOWEVER, MY EMOTIONS WITHERED AWAY ALONGSIDE THE FLOWER.
MIRACULOUSLY, I SURVIVED.
BUT THE BUD HAD YET TO SPROUT AND THE CORROSION WAS SHALLOW.
APPARENTLY, THE FLOWER INSIDE MY HEART HAD ALL BUT WILTED.
NO,
IT WOULD BE BETTER TO SAY I CANNOT.
I WILL LIKELY NEVER AGAIN FALL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE.
I ENVY THE STRENGTH IT TAKES TO WHOLEHEARTEDLY HOLD SOMEONE IN THEIR MIND SO DEARLY.
TUG
THERE ARE TIMES AT WHICH I ENVY THE GIRLS WHOSE BUDS HAVE BEGUN TO SPROUT.

LIEUTENANT, ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT TO BLOOM AND WILT IS TRUE HAPPINESS?
NO, I RETAIN MY NEUTRAL POSITION
TO ACCEPT DEATH IN EXCHANGE FOR LOVE, OR TO FORGO LOVE TO LIVE A LONG LIFE. THE GIRLS ARE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE FREELY BASED ON THEIR OWN VALUES.
THAT IS WHY I BELIEVE THAT THE GIRLS WHO DARE TO BLOOM
HAVE DECIDED THAT TO LIVE IN LOVE WOULD BE THEIR PATH TO HAPPINESS.
IN WHICH CASE, MY ROLE IS TO ASSIST THEIR DECISION
I...
SEE...

...PRIVATE SAWAMURA.
AS I SAID PREVIOUSLY, I AM A NEUTRAL ACTOR WHO MERELY RESPECTS THE WISHES OF THE GIRLS.
..BUT,
IF I WERE TO SAY ONE THING,
IT WOULD BE THAT THE BUDS OF "FLOWER GIRLS"...
AHH, I SEE.
SO THAT'S HOW IT WAS.
WELL, IN NADEKO'S CASE,
IT SEEMS LIKE IT WASN'T REALLY TRUE DETERMINATION.
. HUH?
NADEKO GAVE YOU THE REPORT DIDN'T SHE?
THAT SHE JUST WANTED TO EXPERIENCE "PLAYING LOVERS".

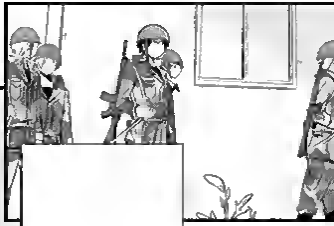
DO NOT SPROUT UNLESS THEY FALL IN LOVE FROM THE BOTTOM OF THEIR HEARTS.
HUH?

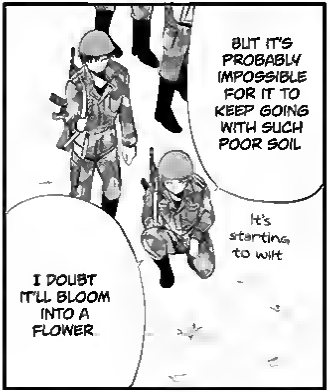
IT IS TRUE THAT THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE MORE CAPABLE THAN YOU.
HOWEVER...

AREN'T THERE ALSO THINGS THAT CAN ONLY BE DONE
BY "PRIVATE SAWA-MURA"?
SHUT

THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY.
DISMISSED!
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

WOW, IT'S RARE TO SEE ONE THAT REACHED THE BUDDING PHASE NATURALLY.


NADEKO'S BUD...


BUT IT'S PROBABLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR IT TO KEEP GOING WITH SUCH POOR SOIL
It's starting to wilt
I DOUBT IT'LL BLOOM INTO A FLOWER

SO IF IT DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH NUTRIENTS,
IT TAKES A HUGE AMOUNT OF ENERGY JUST TO MAINTAIN THE BUD.

NO WAY. DIDN'T YOU LEARN THIS IN THE COOKING COURSE?
IF IT DOESN'T BLOOM, DOES IT JUST STAY AS A BUD?

IT WILTS. BYE-BYE PLANT.

I CAN STOP IT THROUGH FORCE OF WILL!
BUT NADEKO SAID...

HER SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WITH YOU WILL BECOME THE ENERGY TO MAINTAIN HER FLOWER.
HUH? WAIT A SEC.
NADEKO'S SOURCE OF ENERGY IS...

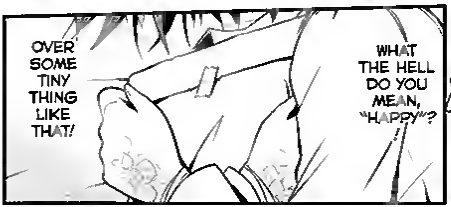
I JUST BURNED MYSELF A BIT.
OH... UM...
EXCUSE ME!
!?
SAWA-MURA?!
I'M AUTHORIZED! I'LL DEAL WITH THAT AFTER-WARDS.
STEP
STEP
UNAUTHO-RIZED INDIVIDUALS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON THIS FLOOR!
HUH? IT'S AT THE END OF THE HALL...
WHERE'S NADEKO'S ROOM?!
AH! NADE-KO'S...

DAMMIT, OF COURSE SOMEONE LIKE-NADEKO WOULD SAY THAT!
SOMEONE THAT YOUNG IS STILL VERY NAIVE ABOUT THE WORLD TO THEM. LOVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD, ENCOMPASSING EVERYTHING
THAT'S EXACTLY HOW IT GOES
LOVE BECOMES EVERY-THING AND THEY PUT EVERYTHING THEY HAVE INTO IT.
THEN IT FILLS THEIR MIND WITH TROUBLES
TO THE POINT WHERE THEY'D STAKE THEIR LIVES ON IT...!!

NADEKO.
YOU LIED AGAIN.
YOU CAN'T STOP YOUR BUD FROM GROWING.
CRACK
THE TRUTH IS, IF YOU END YOUR RELATION-SHIP WITH ME, YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO WILT.
CRACK

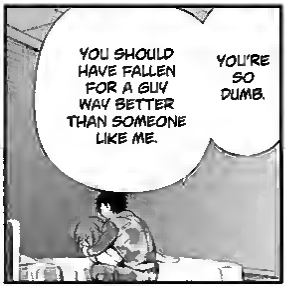
SAWAMURA-SAN, YOU BECAME MY "LOVER" BECAUSE IT WAS YOUR JOB, DIDN'T YOU?
I'M SORRY.
CRACK
YOU CAUGHT ME.
BECAUSE I LOVED YOU, AND LOVED YOU, AND I WAS TRULY HAPPY.
AND YET I WAS ENJOYING MYSELF ALL ON MY OWN.
CRACK
CRACK
SO I THOUGHT I COULD JUST SILENTLY WILT AWAY.
I DIDN'T WANT TO BE A BOTHER TO MY BELOVED SAWAMURA-SAN...
AND IT HURT TO KNOW YOU WERE TROUBLED BECAUSE OF THAT...
BUT THAT WAS SIMPLY MY OWN SELFISH-NESS,

SINCE I WAS ALREADY REALLY HAPPY...
...JUST FROM GETTING THIS BOOK.


WHAT THE HELL DO YOU MEAN, "HAPPY"?
OVER SOME TINY THING LIKE THAT!

GULP

THAT'S NOT TRUE AT ALL
YOU'RE AN INCREDIBLY KIND AND AMAZING PERSON


YOU'RE SO DUMB.
YOU SHOULD HAVE FALLEN FOR A GUY WAY BETTER THAN SOMEONE LIKE ME.

YOU CAME ALL THE WAY HERE AND WORRIED ABOUT ME,
EVEN THOUGH WE'VE ONLY KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR SUCH A SHORT TIME

AND YOU'RE HURTING FOR ME FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART.
MY NUMBER ONE...
...IS YOU, SAWAMURA-SAN.
I WAS SCARED.
THAT EVEN IF I GAVE IT MY ALL,
IT MIGHT STILL NOT BE ENOUGH.

I KEPT SAYING THAT LIVING WITH THE FLOW WAS FOR THE BEST.
I KILLED MY FEELINGS AND MY THOUGHTS.
I PRETENDED IT WAS OBVIOUS BECAUSE "I'M AN ADULT."
...THE FLOWER THAT CHOSE ME.
LIKE THIS, I COULDN'T EVEN PROPERLY FACE...
I WONDER IF I CAN DO IT IF I GIVE IT MY ALL.
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING WE CAN DO AS PARTNERS
ACCOMPANY THEM WITH ALL OF OUR STRENGTH
IT'S NOT JUST THIS DUMB BOOK.
THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF "HAPPINESS" STILL OUT THERE.

WILL I BE ABLE TO REALIZE HER DREAMS?
AREN'T THERE ALSO THINGS THAT CAN ONLY BE DONE BY "PRIVATE SAWAMURA"?
NO, THOSE KINDS OF EXCUSES DON'T MATTER.
ALL I WANT TO DO...
NADEKO
THE BOOK
YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP IT SAFE IN ITS BAG.
TAKE IT OUT AND READ IT.
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT GETS DAMAGED OR DIRTY.

I'LL BUY YOU AS MANY AS YOU WANT.
FROM NOW ON,

I WANT TO GIVE HER MORE.
FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.
I'LL FACE DIFFICULTY AND CHALLENGE AGAIN.
SSI
AND USE ALL OF MY STRENGTH TO SEE THIS THROUGH AND ALLOW HER TO BLOOM.
SSI

THIS IS THE STORY OF THE TIME SPENT...
OKAY.
...BETWEEN ME AND A SMALL FLOWER.

Kalyx

Kalyx Characters & Initial Setting

I STRUGGLED TO FINALIZE NADEKO'S APPEARANCE AND PERSONALITY UNTIL JUST BEFORE I WROTE THE ROUGH DRAFT OF CHAPTER 1. I REMEMBER I DREW A BUNCH OF SKETCHES AND HESITATED BETWEEN A BLACK HAIRED GIRL WHO DIDN'T SHOW MUCH EMOTION, AND THE ENERGETIC NADEKO WE HAVE NOW. IF SHE WERE LIKE THIS AND DIDN'T SHOW EMOTION, I'M SURE HER INTERACTIONS WITH SAWAMURA WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFERENT. IT SEEMS LIKE IT WOULD BE INTERESTING IN ITS OWN RIGHT.

THE FEEL OF THE EMOTIONLESS CHARACTER HERE IS CLOSER TO ROSE'S.

ALSO, WHEN I FIRST STARTED MAKING THE STORY SAWAMURA WAS A YOUNG LABORER WHO WORKED IN A FLOWER GARDEN NEXT TO THE HOSPITAL. HE CARED FOR HIS FLOWERS WITHOUT KNOWING THAT THERE WERE GIRLS BURIED BENEATH THEM, AND NOW AND AGAIN HE'D BEFRIEND THE GIRLS WHO QUIETLY SLIPPED OUT OF THE HOSPITAL.

THERE WAS ALSO A STORY IN WHICH SAWAMURA WAS A RESEARCHER TRYING TO CURE THE FLOWER GIRLS' DISEASE. THE IDEA THAT SAWAMURA WOULD FIGHT ALONGSIDE THEM WAS GIVEN TO ME BY MY EDITOR AND WAS NOT PRESENT AT THIS TIME.